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Intrinsic Motivation in the Responsive Classroom

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INTRINSIC MOTIVATION IN THE RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

Intrinsic Motivation in the Responsive Classroom

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Action Research (EDC 586-7) Final Project

The Responsive Classroom model is considered a positive way to promote intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation in this study was measured through classroom management, teacher/student relationships, and academic choice. The participants of the study were teachers who had been trained in the Responsive Classroom method. Through direct observation and surveys the results of the study proved to be that motivation is a variable dependent on multiple factors including number of years teaching as well as personal philosophy.

PREFACE

“The Responsive Classroom is an approach to elementary teaching that emphasizes social, emotional, and academic growth in a strong and safe school community. The goal is to enable optimal student learning. Created by classroom teachers and backed by evidence from independent research, the Responsive Classroom approach is based on the premise that children learn best when they have both academic and social-emotional skills. The approach therefore consists of classroom and schoolwide practices for deliberately helping children build academic and social-emotional competencies.” -NorthEast Foundation for Children, Inc.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

I have been a teacher at a Responsive Classroom (RC) school for the past four years. While at the school I have been through much training on using intrinsic motivation to increase student productivity and decrease behaviors in the classroom. As it is required at the school to use the RC methods, the students and teachers are trained to draw on intrinsic motivators for everyday applications. This research is an attempt to understand at a deeper level if intrinsic motivation is better than a reward based system from a teacher or administrator perspective. As a teacher I believe that my actions in the classroom have a considerable influence on student success. The main point of the research is to try and discover the underlying reasons why or if intrinsic motivation is a factor in student success in a RC school.

General Background

The RC school is located in a metro area charter district. The purpose of the school is to provide education for Kindergarten through 8th grade students who are two or more years behind in reading. Students may come to the school for a variety of reasons, as it is a public school located in a central location. The students of the RC school are usually below grade level on reading assessments and need to make gains in order to score well on the state tests. Parents may choose the RC school for its location and programs or they may be referred by other school districts. Forty-seven percent of our students are English Language Learners from Somalia. Ninety percent of the students are living at or below the poverty line. The school population fluctuates from

approximately two hundred and fifteen students to two hundred and forty-five students. Currently there are two hundred and twenty-one students enrolled in grades Kindergarten through Eighth. Each class has approximately twenty-six students with eighth grade at eighteen and first grade at thirty-two. Individual classrooms are staffed by the lead teacher and at least one Educational Assistant (EA). There is a twenty-five percent Special Education population at the school with six Special Education teachers and 14 Special Education EAs acting as a support system. The school has been a RC school for six years at the time of this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine how teachers utilize intrinsic motivation to make students more successful. In this study the terms *successful* and *intrinsic motivation* will be defined as follows: “Successful” will be defined as students who are actively engaged in the classroom activities in order to facilitate their own learning. Survey respondents define “Intrinsic Motivation” in various ways, however I define it as what people will do without external inducement in the form of tangible rewards and praise/discipline from the teacher.

Guiding Questions

I conducted an initial survey of the literature in the area of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation in the elementary and middle school classrooms, which led me to decide on the topic of how teachers rely on different types of motivation in a RC school. After reviewing surveys that teachers had filled out and observing their classrooms three themes emerged. These three themes were: classroom management,

student teacher relationships, and academic choice within prescribed learning environments.

After the three themes emerged I began to develop some guiding questions within each of the three areas. These questions forced me to reread surveys and observation notes for specific instances that I could use to support my emerging themes. In addition, these questions helped me to limit my inquiry for the literature review.

Classroom management was the first theme I chose to focus on. How do teachers use RC to manage their classrooms? How do teachers perceive their classroom management styles and are they accurately representing themselves? Student teacher relationships were the second theme that I focused on based on the classroom observations. In every observation that I completed I noticed that the students who had a clear connection with the teacher seemed to be more willing to go above and beyond on their work. The concept of students doing more on their own based on a caring relationship led me to guiding questions based on this observed trend. What strategies are teachers utilizing that motivate students to complete work? One of the purposes of this study is to see if teachers feel that they are using RC as a motivational tool to increase student success in the classroom. Academic choice is the backbone of the Responsive Classroom system when it relates to the academic side of the program. The way that academic choice is utilized in our prescribed learning environments is the third theme that developed from the surveys and observations. How do teachers use academic choice to motivate students? One of the purposes of this study is to assess how teachers use RC to enhance their classroom environments. A major part of the RC experience is the first six weeks of school where students and teachers are constructing processes and

procedures by which the classroom will be run for the remainder of the year. Teachers utilize these rules all year long in order to remind students that their classroom procedures were a class decision. The creation of the learning environment is a student led process with teacher input as needed.

All three of the above areas: classroom management, student teacher relationships, and academic choice in the learning environment are intertwined in the daily classroom routine. There are two guiding questions that serve as a bridge between all three areas: 1) how does RC utilize intrinsic motivation while at the same time foster relationships and 2) what is the teachers' role in employing intrinsic motivation? I am interested in the data collected for these two questions because it serves as a link to the other three areas and informs the teachers of not only what they are supposed to be doing but also how they should be doing it.

Limitations

This study is based on the perspectives of teachers who are currently employed at a charter school and have volunteered to complete a survey as well as be observed in their classrooms. In order to keep the scope of the study manageable, only teachers and administrators were asked to participate in the online survey and only eight of those were observed. Perspectives of the teachers and administrators not involved in the study, educational assistants, parents, and students were not considered at this time. The discoveries made in this study may provide the basis of another study where the perspectives not considered will be taken into consideration.

Significance of the Study

The lasting impact of the study will be improved use of classroom management, student teacher relationships, and academic choice in learning environments in my classroom at the charter school. The findings of my research will be used to adjust and improve current practices in my current classroom. In the broader context this study may influence other RC teachers to adjust and improve their own classroom practices in a RC setting.

This study was designed and conducted in the “Action Research” model. The desired result was to identify a problem in my educational setting and then to make recommendations on how to address the problem identified (Mills, 2000). My findings are directly related to the RC school in which I work. The study was conducted about classroom practices similar throughout the school; therefore, recommendations will be the most significant to my fellow teachers and me.

Overview of Setting and Participants

The teachers who were observed and surveyed for this study are teachers who work in a RC school, in the Twin Cities Metro Area. The RC school can be clarified further as a school that follows the tenets of the Responsive Classroom Model for both academic and behavioral structures of the entire school. This RC school is a charter that maintains a minimum of 215 students and a maximum of 245. Due to the smaller size, teachers and administrators are able to engage in instructional practices that are different than what can be offered at the city public schools. These instructional

practices include but are not limited to small group instruction, computerized instruction, morning meetings, counseling, and individualized instruction.

The Responsive Classroom Model

RC is a model that emphasizes social, emotional and academic growth in a safe school environment. There are three main components of RC; the guiding practices, classroom practices, and school wide practices. The guiding practices of RC are based on the idea that the social curriculum is an integral part of the learning experience that needs as much nurturing and practice as the academic curriculum. The Northeast Foundation for Children founded RC and offers training in its methodology during the summer and school year.

Teachers at the RC school are required to participate in RC 1 and RC 2, going to either the weeklong training for two summers or one of the eight-week classes during the school year. These trainings consist of learning how to run a morning meeting, teach a guided discovery, and use teacher language to increase student awareness of their own work and potential.

The RC school also has an RC coach that meets with the staff as a whole four times a year to run an adult morning meeting and increase our adult community time and communication. The RC coach also meets with the classroom teachers one-on-one to observe their lessons and make suggestions about how to better incorporate RC practices into the classroom. Teachers are then grouped into lower and upper grades to talk about how they are implementing RC protocols in their classrooms.

RC training promotes intrinsic motivation in many different ways. First, the RC model stresses that education is its own reward and that children want to learn, therefore

no additional inducement is required other than the classroom community to ensure that learning is achieved. Secondly, teachers are taught to use teacher language that does not give them the power to approve or disapprove of a behavior or academic event. An example of this would be that instead of a teacher saying, "I really like your picture, its very good," they should say, "I notice how you use shapes and colors in your picture, what are some things you were trying to communicate?" By giving specific feedback the teacher is telling the student that they notice their effort and it is up to the student to then take the assignment to the next level. A third way that RC training promotes intrinsic motivation is through Academic Choice. Teachers are taught in a weeklong workshop how to introduce, run, and support an Academic Choice assignment.

In addition to the three examples above RC publishes books and guides on how to run a RC classroom that all teachers are required to have on hand in their rooms. These guides are to be utilized on a daily basis in the RC school. Teachers are trained to relate CARES (Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-Control) to daily lessons and to have these core values posted in their rooms within sight of the students. RC training is continuous throughout the school year as we meet with our RC coach, have staff meetings on RC, and go to weekly study groups where it is discussed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

I decided to focus my research on how teachers use motivation in the RC school in conjunction with RC philosophy, so in each of the themes I will look for how teachers use motivation- this was decided after my initial survey into the literature surrounding intrinsic motivation. After conducting teacher observations and reviewing the submitted surveys I began to see three strong themes emerging (classroom management, student/teacher relationships, and academic choice and intrinsic motivation) and a more in-depth literature review was conducted on these themes. The following review of the literature focuses on the three aforementioned areas.

Classroom Management

Ellett & Teddlie (2003) characterize one way of increasing self-control through the use of rewards distributed at various intervals; these rewards function as an extrinsic motivational strategy. Someone other than the self provides extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation reinforces a desired behavior that persists after the reinforcement has been eliminated (Ferster and Skinner, 1957). Therein it follows that students who are extrinsically rewarded for desired behaviors will keep exhibiting the same type of behavior without prompting. Walker, Colvin, and Ramsey (1995) describe three types of behavioral incentives that are used to shape student behavior: social reinforcement, tangibles, and privileges. Gresham (1998) also talks about the importance of reinforcement-based strategies in classroom management that include social praise, activity reinforcement, and tokens/points for training students in social behavior.

By contrast the goal of the intrinsic motivational strategy of classroom management is to increase student control over him/herself. Intrinsic motivation has the greatest chance of succeeding when it is strongly supported by the social environment. According to Walker, Colvin, and Ramsey (1999) if the material itself is engaging and meaningful then there is far less likelihood of other competing classroom stimuli triggering inappropriate behavior. Tying this all-together, Gettinger (1988) identified quality instruction as one of the earliest proactive strategies that should be considered in classroom management. When students are engaged actively, fewer problems occur academically and teachers are more apt to include such strategies across the curriculum (Desander, 2000). Cecilia Pierce (1994) stated that the classroom is critical for a students' educational development. A sense of security is key to the academic and social growth of all the students in the classroom. Teachers can assure the security and well being of all the students by creating social environments that emphasize appropriate behavior and foster a sense of community where there are common understandings of appropriate behavior. In turn students will then learn to internalize the belief that security is the key to a successful classroom and moderate their own behavior (Pierce, 1994).

Teachers play a key role in the development of a classroom community that promotes intrinsically motivated behavior. Quay and Quaglia (2004), in "Creating a Classroom Culture That Inspires Student Learning" offer suggestions to teachers on how to create safe classroom environments that promote intrinsic motivation. According to the authors "the more your students feel that they are a part of the classroom community, the more likely they are to become connected to the course,

subject, and even the school” (Quay, Quaglia, 2004 pg. 1). They assert that the community in the classroom creates student ownership of the classroom management system and that this is needed in order for students to become academic risk takers. Students who take academic risks are more quickly led to a place where learning begins to become more meaningful to them.

Jones (1991) makes the link between teachers’ classroom management and student behavior by laying out more guidelines for creating a safe and intrinsically motivated classroom. The author judges that teachers who have clear and consistent expectations have students who are academically and socially secure in the classroom thus promoting an intrinsic model of behavior management. Teachers whose expectations and rules are unclear or unfair have students who do not feel secure in the classroom and will constantly need extrinsic behavior modification to comply. One of the major factors in classroom management, according to Jones, is the high expectations for all students and clear and concise communication of those expectations to students. Students need to know that all classmates will be held to the same standards consequently making all students feel secure.

James Raffini (1993) emphasizes the importance of a classroom environment where student motivation is the main focus on learning. In his book, “Winners Without Losers: Structures and Strategies for Increasing Student Motivation to Learn”, Raffini discusses the need for classrooms where the teachers reinforce intrinsic motivation by having visual reminders posted about behavior expectations and classroom rules. According to Raffini (1993) teachers who are consistent in their rules and consequences have fewer behavior problems with students. Teachers who use clear hand signals,

communicate with direct eye contact, and hold students to the class rules at all times are more successful in building a classroom environment that is cohesive.

Carol Ames (1990) writes that teachers should not rely on “conventional wisdom” all the time when considering intrinsic behavior strategies. Ames counsels that by being a “teacher leader” in the classroom, teachers can serve as role models on how to motivate from within. In order to strengthen the classroom environment Ames urges teachers to participate in such activities as morning meetings and classroom rule discussions as an “equal stakeholder” rather than as the person in charge. By allowing students to take more ownership of the classroom rules and expectations Ames believes that a partnership is formed that strengthens the teacher-student relationship.

Student/Teacher Relationship

For the purpose of this study student/teacher relationships will be defined as the social context in which teachers and students interact on a daily basis in the classroom. Deborah Stipek (2006) states in “Relationships Matter” that students function more effectively when they feel valued. Stipek further explores the ideas of student teacher relationships as a positive and nurturing force that directly affects how productive the student is and how willing they are to take educational risks. Students also develop an internal “stopwatch” that helps them utilize the positive benefits of relationships when confronted by an academic hurdle. The author clearly states that being supportive to a student does not mean that one has to lower the academic expectations for that student. On the contrary, if the relationship is encouraging the student feels cared about and high academic expectations will cause the student to rise to the challenge because they feel supported by their teachers. By developing relationships students learn to internalize the

behaviors they see modeled by the teacher. The author finishes her observations by concluding that “the most difficult to reach students will often go all out for a teacher who demonstrates caring for them as individuals and commitment to their successes” (pg. 48).

Beck and Malley (1998) insist that in order for students to succeed in the classroom, they must feel that they belong and the main component of belonging is the student/teacher relationship. Teachers who develop relationships with students are taking steps to prevent alienation and isolation from others and the educational process. Students fail classes and become withdrawn because of this alienation. Teachers are the first line of defense and play a critical role in developing a students’ sense of belonging. Teachers inadvertently serve as role models for students who lack the support of family or friends. By demonstrating the core values of sharing and caring, teachers draw students to them and students will begin to internalize the behavior they see as apart of their core value system also. This sense of belonging offers students the opportunity to experience positive adult relationships as well. The student/teacher bond “creates the foundations upon which a sense of belonging can develop” (Beck and Malley, 1998 pg. 134). There are two key ways in which teachers can foster positive student/teacher relationships. The first way is for teachers to be kind to their students on a consistent basis. The second is for the teacher to self disclose. Beck and Malley articulate that self-disclosure “...reduces the power differential and breaks down relationship resistance and starts the process of belonging with attachment” (1998, pg. 135). In order for students to feel that they can succeed, they must feel attached to the teacher and school community. The first logical step for this process to begin is in the classroom.

Montague and Rinaldi (2001) wrote in their article, “Classroom Dynamics and Children at-risk: A Follow-up”, that there is a link between student/teacher relationships and student success. If the relationship is supportive and caring then the student will rise academically.

Carol Santa (2006) supports the importance of student/teacher relationships by asserting that student/teacher relationships are the foundation of all that happens in the classroom. Santa continues, “successful learning in the classroom has far more to do with human relationships and classroom community than with the content of our classes” (pg. 467). Students will work that much harder to make their teacher happy if they have a good relationship with their teacher and want to emulate their actions. The article shows the importance of student/teacher relationships to student engagement and success. Santa (2006) makes the link to classroom management, when she explains that students will do better in a classroom where expectations are clear and consistent. She also points out that students with positive student/teacher relationships will excel in a learning environment that promotes choices.

Academic Choice and Intrinsic Motivation

I will define academic choice as an opportunity that the teacher designs for a class to experience multiple ways of learning one concept. The main goals in academic choice are that students will gain competence, a sense of relatedness to their lives, and increase control over their own learning experiences; i.e., become more intrinsically motivated.

Competence. Competence or perceived competence is an indicator of intrinsic motivation that can be seen in the following three articles. Cocks (2004) delved into relationships among perceived competence, intrinsic value and mastery goal orientation in English and Math. Cocks studied 77 fifth and sixth grade students in Metro East Sydney with middle class socio-economic status and Anglo-Australian background. The students filled out questionnaires and then were interviewed later in the year. The surveys were modeled and then completed independently. Cocks found that competence and perception of competence is based on peers, parents, and teacher comments and that higher intrinsic motivation equaled higher ability.

Pintrich & McKeachie (2000) discuss how to make students effective lifelong learners who learn to use strategies to increase their perception of competence and actual competence in academics. The authors list the following five elements needed to increase effective learning: intrinsic motivation, a knowledge base that provides structure for further learning, skills, strategies for efficient learning, and metacognitive strategies.

Hudley (2002) examined one high school and one middle school in a southern California community where 318 students participated. Of the participants sixty percent were high school students and the rest middle school students. Each student completed a 53-item questionnaire on perceived educational aspirations, perceived career aspirations, perceived support from teachers, perceived equal treatment of ethnic groups, self-appraisals of academic efficacy, and self-perception of intrinsic motivation (Hudley, 2002). Data was collected on attendance, behavior and GPA and, as predicted, more positive attitudes toward school and self were related to engagement. The students'

perception of their competence encourages learning and promotes a positive attitude towards education.

Lange (1997) examined the role of motivational factors on the educational achievement of children in the third, fourth, and fifth grades. The four factors assessed were- the child's motivational attributions, motivational goal orientation, self- perception, and master-oriented behaviors in the classroom. Competence in this study was seen as being goal-oriented, able to work independently, seeking out challenging tasks, and participating actively in the learning process. Exhibiting high levels of these mastery behaviors directly correlated to scoring well on achievement tests as they were found to be a combination of ability and motivation. The link between the goal setting, achievement and ability can be looked at many different ways as seen in the five articles above. As intrinsic motivation develops in students it allows them to take on more proactive roles in their own learning and competence levels.

Relationship to Life. Relating what is learned to life also increases motivation to learn new things. Boekaerts (2002) synthesized a booklet on the principles of motivation that emerged from research on motivational practices on school learning. The booklet focuses on two eleven-year-old students, a boy and a girl, who go to school in different parts of the world. For the purpose of this review the focus is on the last construct that students are more committed to learning if objectives are compatible with their goals. Boekaerts found that students are more interested in doing activities for which they think they have the necessary competence and if it appeals to their pre-set goals. Striving to keep learning in context allows teachers to focus on student achievement while giving students the opportunity to weave their own experiences and goals into the learning. Boekaerts (2002)

discusses motivating students by aligning curricular goals with their own goals. Students want to negotiate their learning goals by questioning the how, when and with whom portions of the class.

Bomia (1997) details intrinsic motivation by reviewing various motivational theories and supporting whether teaching strategies can influence that type of learning. It was determined that specific teaching strategies do have a positive effect on various components (relevance, interest, satisfaction) related to intrinsic motivation. When teachers become more aware of said strategies, they can reinforce student willingness and enthusiasm to learn intrinsically. Producing instruction that is interesting, meaningful, and challenging will draw the interest and relevance, known as 'Value', of the student. Assuredly, students who are more involved in their learning experience are more apt to be motivated to learn more simply for the sake of knowing the information.

Ediger (2001) debates the merits of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in an article about reading models. Student achievement can be raised in reading by focusing on individual reading instruction to help students make and meet their own goals while motivating themselves to learn more. Ediger states that the teacher plays a key role in the classroom with motivation and outlines techniques such as using student chosen library books for reading assignments to encourage intrinsic motivation. By concluding the books with informal conferences with students, teachers can assess the knowledge gained and notice learner progress and achievement on an individual level. Ediger states that focusing on intrinsic motivation can be achieved by minimizing the use of formal testing and textbooks where all students read the same stories regardless of interest and abilities, and a philosophy of sameness. Relating to student interest can be done in many ways,

including academic choice where students get to choose how to learn as long as they are demonstrating mastery of the skill taught. The relationship between student goals and teacher goals is bridged when teachers allow students to read books that interest them or do projects that allow them to bring their own life experiences into the classroom.

Choice. Control or the perception of control over their own learning is the third and most widely studied student motivation category in the conflict between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Esquivel and Keitel (1990) focused on the student's perceived sense of control over the outcome of an achievement situation. After administering a questionnaire to the students at the beginning, middle and end of the study Esquivel found that students who were put on her behavior intervention of small group meetings made academic gains. The author used classroom meetings to observe attitudes and perception changes and motivation. By creating caring environments students feel safe to ask for help from their classmates. A positive classroom environment allowed students to experience control over their own behavior with a safety net of caring classmates. By using class compliments where individual students could compliment the class as a whole Esquivel found that everyone began to respond to the openness by participating more fully. The sense of control over their own educational destiny allowed students to make what they wanted out of the class environment.

Oginsky (2003) studied a sixth grade math class at Webber Middle School in Saginaw, Michigan. The author looked for connections between positive, non-controlling feedback and student's view of the classroom as a safe learning environment. The study also examined if allowing choice in assignment would increase intrinsic motivation as evidenced by an increase in completed assignments. The results of this study showed that

students who had choices for assignments increased their assignment completion. Supporting autonomy in class work allows students to control the degree of work completed and also the pace at which it is done. This relates to the RC tenet of Academic Choice. Students are allowed to use different vehicles as long as they all show up at the same place academically.

In conclusion the review of literature about intrinsic motivation has allowed me to draw connections between what I see on a daily basis and research based findings. Classroom management, student/teacher relationships, and academic choice within intrinsic motivation are the three main themes that came out after the teacher observations and surveys. Through literature reviews I learned that there are many types of motivation and ways that they are categorized.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Framework

The form of research being conducted in this study is “Action Research”. According to Geoffrey Mills (2000) in his book “Action Research – A Guide for the Teacher Researcher”, “Action research is an inquiry for those who work in education to gather information about their particular educational setting with the goal of gaining insight into and improving whatever situation is being investigated” (pg. 5). Addressing a primary concern, action research is not value free, and is flexible. Action research generally employs qualitative research strategies.

Qualitative research “uses narrative, descriptive approaches to data collection to understand the way things are and what it means from the perspective of the research participants” (Mills, 2000, pg. 4). Qualitative research can take many forms and two of the forms are in-depth surveys and observations. The in-depth survey is the method I employed to gather data on teacher opinion and engagement in RC and intrinsic motivation. I used observations as the method to verify how teachers actually use RC models in relation to intrinsic motivation in their classrooms. Using the words and actions of my participants provides authenticity to my research findings.

Setting and Participants

The teacher participants in this study were employed at the RC school. They were employed for at least six months at the time of observation and were instructing a class in the kindergarten through eighth grade. RC training happens in the summer for one week and at the time of this study there was a variation of experience and training

levels. It is required that all teachers have at least two years of RC training and attend professional development during the year that enhances the training. It is possible for a teacher to be a second year teacher with no RC training depending on the training schedule.

At the RC school I am currently designated as the Middle School Technology teacher. I teach three sections of technology classes: sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. I am also the Enrichment Coordinator for the school and teach six sections of enrichment classes, which offer advanced students the opportunity to participate in project-based activities, twice a week for an hour. The other teacher participants are licensed to teach their particular grade level or specialty. These are teachers I see on a daily basis and am familiar with their teaching strategies. The teacher participants volunteered to participate in the study. Because teachers volunteered to participate in the study the fourteen surveys and the eight observations are not representative of the entire population of the teachers and administrators working at the school. Of the thirty-six eligible teachers and administrators to participate eighteen teachers turned in consent forms, fourteen teachers took the survey, eight teachers were observed, and no administrators chose to participate. The sample, however, provided a group of teachers who were willing to discuss RC and motivation as well as be observed in their classroom setting.

Below you will find a list of the teachers who were surveyed and some basic information about them. Pseudonyms are being used because this was an anonymous online survey that did not collect personal data on individual participants.

1. Oates has been a teacher for thirty years, worked at the RC school for fifteen years and had RC training during the summer of 2004 and 2005.
2. Hemmingway has been a teacher for four years, worked at the RC school for one year and has not attended the RC training.
3. Joyce has been a teacher for nine years, worked at the RC school for two years and had RC training during the fall of 2006 and 2007.
4. Bronte has been a teacher for four years, worked at the RC school for four years and had RC training in the fall of 2007.
5. Austen has been a teacher for nine years, worked at the RC school for three years and had RC training in the summer of 2000.
6. Eliot has been a teacher for five years, worked at the RC school for two years and has never attended an RC training.
7. Walker has been a teacher for ten years, worked at the RC school for two years and had RC training in the summer of 2006.
8. Silverstein has been a teacher for seven years, worked at the RC school for 10 years and had the RC training in the summer of 2002.
9. Carlin has been a teacher for seven years, worked at the RC school for five years, and had RC training in the summer of 2004 and 2005.
10. Stoker has been a teacher for eight years, worked at the RC school for four years and had the RC training in the summer of 2007.
11. Shelley has been a teacher for three years, worked at the RC school for three years and had the RC training in the summer of 2007.

12. Plato has been a teacher for four years, worked at the RC school for four years and had RC training in the summer of 2005 and 2006.
13. Wells has been a teacher for fourteen years, worked at the RC school for two years and had RC training in the summer of 2006 and 2007.
14. Dumas has been a teacher for thirteen years, worked at the RC school for one year and has not attended an RC training.

The teachers who were observed all taught at the RC school, but they are not necessarily the same teachers that filled out the survey, as the survey was anonymous. Below you will find a list of the teachers that were observed with some basic information about them. Pseudonyms are used to protect the anonymity of the teacher participants. For the purpose of this study “lower grades” will be defined as K-2,” middle grades” as 3-5, and “upper grades” as 6-8.

1. Ms. P, a middle grades teacher observed for three one-hour periods of group teaching and individual work.
2. Ms. Y, an upper grades teacher observed for three one-hour periods of whole group instruction.
3. Ms. G, a lower grade teacher observed for three one-hour periods of small group instruction and whole group instruction
4. Mr. B, an upper grades teacher observed for three one-hour periods of individual instruction, group work, and whole group instruction.
5. Ms. Pi, an upper grades teacher observed for three one-hour periods of small group work, whole group instruction, and project time.

6. Ms. R, a lower grades teacher observed for three one-hour periods during small group instruction.
7. Ms. Bl, a lower and middle grades teacher observed for three one-hour periods of whole group instruction and individual work time.
8. Mr. O, a middle grades teacher observed for three one-hour periods of whole group instruction, small group instruction, and testing.

Research Design

Fourteen in-depth surveys were collected from teachers regarding their interpretations of intrinsic motivation in the RC. Eight teachers were also observed for three one-hour sessions each to examine how teachers actually rely on intrinsic motivation during instructional periods. All surveys were conducted prior to starting the observations so that there would be no chance that the teacher would fill out the survey after an observation.

The surveys were accessed through an online survey program called 'SurveyMonkey.com'. Teachers received their link to the survey via email after returning a completed consent form. Each survey was six pages long with twenty questions total. All questions were optional and teachers could choose to leave blanks without penalties. As this survey was online there were not specific times that it had to be completed. The survey window opened on February 4th and closed on March 10th, however all the surveys were completed as of February 15th. The questions were centered in areas that related to teacher opinion of intrinsic motivation as well as how they use motivation with their students to increase student successes.

I conducted observations of eight teachers after the final survey had been received. Each observation was an hour long and I visited each classroom three times on three different days in order to get a broad view of the classroom structure. During the observations I was looking for how teachers use different types of motivation within and outside of the RC structure.

Teachers volunteered to participate in the surveys first. The process of recruiting volunteers began when I put a letter of invitation and consent form in each of teachers' and administrators' school mailboxes (after obtaining Institutional Review Board approval). The letter explained that I was looking for teachers and administrators to share their opinions and experiences with me via an online survey. In the letter I asked that anyone who was interested to please return the signed consent form to my school mailbox as soon as possible. On the survey consent form there was a line at the bottom that asked the participants to check yes or no if they were willing to receive information about being observed at a later date. As the consent forms were returned I sent out emails that had the survey links attached. Teachers that indicated that they were willing to be observed had an observation letter and consent form put in their mailboxes with instructions to return the consent form to my school mailbox. The survey process was fully automated and I simply had to wait for completed surveys to come in. Twelve teachers returned the observation consent. The teachers who volunteered to do the survey and be observed were all teachers whom I know well and have worked with for at least six months.

I realized that I had too many observations to complete in a timely manner. To alleviate my time dilemma I decided to choose a cross section of teachers from the

twelve consent forms I received. After reviewing the forms I decided to observe eight teachers; three upper school, two lower school, two middle school, and one who teaches both lower and middle school. The people I contacted about observation appointments were teachers who had varying experience levels, teaching styles, as well as buying in points on RC. I chose them to get a broader sample of teacher participants. I now had fourteen completed surveys as well as a pool of eight teachers who were willing and able to participate in the observation process.

Role of the Researcher

My role in the research process was to gather the data to understand the perspectives of the teachers and administrators. The information from the surveys was organized into thematic areas and then compared with the observational data, which was also organized according to themes. This information was then compared to each other and then used to make recommendations.

My role as researcher is intertwined with my role as teacher and enrichment coordinator. I know these teachers and I work with them daily in the school environment. I see them in meetings, the hallways, and even eat lunch with some of them. The teachers and I have a rapport based on equality and respect. I try hard to foster a positive relationship with all of my coworkers regardless of teaching practices and personal feelings. The teachers who volunteered to participate in the study are teachers with whom I have a good relationship, I feel that they chose to participate because of our relationship and because they have been through a similar thesis project in the past and know how important participation is to the success of the project. The eight teachers who I chose to observe were teachers who I felt represented a cross

section of all of the teachers employed at the RC school. They are not necessarily the same teachers that completed the surveys but had simply returned the consent forms. I believe that this mix of teachers has given me results that are useable to me as a teacher and researcher.

Data Collection Strategies

Surveys

Teacher safety was ensured via consent forms attached to letters of invitation to participate in the study. Signatures of consent from teachers and administrators were obtained after each person had read and understood the terms and conditions laid out in the consent form. After returning the consent form participants received an email that reviewed the consent process- including a statement that they may withdraw from the study at any time without negative affect on relationships with the RC school, Augsburg, or me- with a link to the survey attached. Pseudonyms were used when quoting or referencing teachers to assure confidentiality.

After consent was obtained, data was collected via an in-depth survey hosted by an online survey site- www.surveymonkey.com. The goal of the survey was to explore viewpoints of each teacher and administrator regarding intrinsic motivation and the RC model. The in-depth survey allows the researcher to have freedom in the survey process. There are a set of predetermined questions that give the survey a structure but the questions are all open-ended and within the freedom of an anonymous survey teachers were frank and to the point. As the surveys were completed they were carefully downloaded and put into individual spreadsheets with pseudonyms attached.

Observations

Teacher safety was ensured via a three-way check to make sure that they understood what they were consenting to. Teachers had the opportunity to check a box for more information about observations on the survey consent form as a primary recruiting method. Second, teachers received a letter of invitation attached to an observation consent form that was to be completed and returned to my school mailbox. Third, I contacted teachers to set up an observation appointment where I asked if they had any questions about the consent process. Finally, all participants were told prior to the first observation that they may withdraw from the study without negative affect on relationships with the RC school, Augsburg, or me. Pseudonyms were used when quoting or referencing teachers to assure confidentiality.

After the consent was obtained, data was collected via three one-hour observations of each teacher, during which I took field notes. The goal of the observation was to explore how teachers actually used intrinsic motivation within the RC Model in everyday situations. Observing each teacher three times allowed me to see patterns within the classrooms as opposed to snapshots of data that might only be occurring on that particular day. There is not a predetermined time of day to observe so I was able to see many facets of an average school day across the spectrum of classes and teaching structures. I did not have a specific list of criteria I was looking for but always started out noting the classroom environment and room details with the context of the age of the students and their obvious affect on the room itself. After that initial scan I sat quietly in the back or side of the room taking notes on the teacher language, use of intrinsic motivation (or extrinsic motivation), and general organization of the

lesson. As the class went on around me I recorded notes, writing down the teacher words so I could capture the meaning of what was being said as well as the teacher actions. The observer comments were my perspective on the observations. These transcriptions will be referred to as field notes.

Field notes give credibility to the information gathered because researchers become aware of the fact that all of the words used in the observer comments represent a judgment from the researcher. Realizing that one cannot fully capture everything adds to the researcher conveying as much as possible to paper (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, pg. 119). This made it very easy for me review my field notes and be able to report the findings and leave out my biases because they were clear and identifiable in the field notes.

Data Analysis Strategies

The data analysis process began once survey and observation data was collected. This process entailed the analysis of the surveys to identify areas of data that related to one another. Similarly, the data analysis of the observation field notes entailed identifying statements and actions that related to each other. Information was then grouped into the pertinent groups- this process is referred to as coding. "Coding represents the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualized and put back together in new ways. It is the central process by which theories are built from data," according to Strauss and Corbin (1990, pg. 23). In order to report my findings coding was done throughout the data analysis process. If six or more of the teachers had similar comments on the survey, I considered it as a theme. Coding also helped identify the recurring themes found during the observations. If I found that there was similar teacher

language or actions in three or more of the observations, I also considered it as a theme. Coding helped identify the three key themes that emerged from my data, once the key themes emerged a literature review was conducted around the three themes in order to form links between prior research and what I was finding in my own data.

The data analysis strategy used to develop theory based on the coded information from the interviews was grounded theory. Grounded theory can be defined as “the discovery of theory from data” (Glasser & Strauss, 1967, pg. 1). The basis for grounded theory is that data collection and analysis are not separate but an integral part of theory development. The data collected should help direct the development of theory and in turn theory development should help direct data collection. Data collection and theory development are intertwined in qualitative study.

Achieving Validity

Bias is hard to escape when you are emotionally involved with your research. Instead of covering up or trying to cover up bias my field notes grant the bias of the researcher by using observer comments. This process allowed me to recognize what my biases were and how my biases could influence my results if I let them. Moreover, I took great care and consideration into transcribing my field notes accurately. This care with the transcription translates into an accurate account of the participants’ words and actions.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter discusses the findings from the teacher participant surveys and observations. These findings represent themes emerging from the data in the three themes of classroom management, student teacher relationships, and academic choice in the learning environment.

Definitions of Intrinsic Motivation

My study is based on teacher perceptions of intrinsic motivation in the Responsive Classroom School. It is relevant at this point to share how the teachers who took the survey defined intrinsic motivation at the RC school before discussion of the key themes begins. The following section consists of quotes from teachers regarding their definition of intrinsic motivation in the RC school.

Teacher definitions of intrinsic motivation in the RC school varied from survey to survey, nevertheless, many teachers still associate intrinsic motivation with doing work for the joy of the work itself. Many teachers included aspects of personal expectations in their definitions of intrinsic motivation. In addition several teachers indicated the importance of free choice in their definitions of intrinsic motivation. The following is a list of teacher given definitions of intrinsic motivation.

- Something that comes from within.
- Internal interest to do something.
- Doing what you can to motivate students.
- Motivation that comes from inside us.
- Coming from within yourself. You wanting to do your best.

- Being motivated from the inside of yourself, wanting to do it for yourself.
- The inner drive that causes that person to do something.
- Motivation toward certain choices based on internal values, needs, etc.
- Doing something because you want to do it not for any other reason.
- Motivation to complete a task or project because it fulfills you.
- Motivated by self and not others.
- People must have a reason within themselves, not stemming from outside pressures or obligations.

Definitions of a Responsive Classroom

It is also relevant at this point to highlight the teacher perceptions of a RC environment and how working in one has altered or enforced notions of motivation. My study is based on the combination of intrinsic motivation and the RC. The following section consists of quotes from teachers regarding how working in a RC school has changed or reinforced their ideas about student motivation.

Teacher definitions differed from survey to survey but many teachers still associate RC with a push towards using only intrinsic motivation. Several teachers include aspects of a solid foundation for further growth as a part of their definition. The following is a list of teacher given quotes on how working in a RC school has changed or reinforced their ideas about student motivation. Some teachers felt that RC built upon already established beliefs and practices.

- It has reinforced my belief that true learning is self-motivated and many times self-guided.

-It has impacted the focus of student based learning and choices. The students work much better when they had a choice in what they were doing.

-This was something very important to me prior to RC . . . Alfie Kohn is one of my favorite authors, Punished By Rewards.

Other teachers found that RC changed their perceptions of behavior and community in the classroom.

-It has changed the way I deal with behavior. It gives me less options when dealing with poor behavior.

-I have become a more positive teacher and found alternative ways to keep my kids interested and excited about new things.

-I try more now to draw out students own “want” to show off their ability and to be proud of themselves and what they have accomplished.

-I am better able to maintain my focus on teaching when students know what is expected and are able to correct it themselves.

-RC offered a solid foundation of a way to create and intrinsically motivate a classroom.

-It has changed it a lot, but I think everyone in the school has to abide by it to really work.

Still others found that RC as a system was something they had to do and weren't supportive of all of the tenets.

-Here we have to use RC, we cannot give rewards. However those of us that have been around awhile know to just not say anything and give the kids rewards anyway.

-I am still a little foggy on how to best use intrinsic motivation, so I am not sure how working in a RC school has changed or focused my teaching.

-Not very educated on RC. I have tried to reach students by means of their intrinsic motivation for 13 years.

-I follow most of it to comply with the school, but it is more effective for me to be strict and have very high expectations.

Many teachers responded that the RC method has changed the way they teach or has enhanced their previously held beliefs about intrinsic motivation.

Key Themes

Three key themes began to emerge during the course of the observations and the review of the surveys regarding teacher perceptions and actions related to intrinsic motivation and RC. The following areas are discussions of the themes that developed during the course of the survey review and observations. The three key themes are Classroom Management, Student Teacher Relationships, and Academic Choice in the Learning Environment.

Classroom Management

For the purpose of this study classroom management is defined as the way in which a teacher communicates and enforces the behavior expectations in a class. In an RC school, behavior expectations and consequences are school wide and logical. Students are expected to learn to self-regulate their own behavior through a series of steps starting with 'Take a Break'. According to RC tenets students will know when they need a break and go to a predestinated chair to think about their behavior before it can become a class issue, this is an example of intrinsic motivation. Using intrinsic

motivation to regulate behavior is a core piece of the RC model. Students feel safe in classes where clear and consistent expectations are present. When students feel safe they are more willing to take academic risks. After reviewing the surveys and observations I noticed that classroom management was a theme that came up again and again in every transcript.

Data from Surveys

The teachers had many things to say about classroom management in their surveys. One of the things that teachers commented on frequently throughout all of the surveys was that RC relies on kids to self-regulate but does not have any contingencies if they cannot do so. Misbehaving students in fact need more attention than the students who are intrinsically motivating themselves to behave. Austen made the following comments regarding his classroom management dilemmas in a RC model.

I follow most of it to comply with the school, but it is more effective for me to be strict and have very high expectations. I don't have time to monitor who is in a break and whether or not they have thought about what they did. For me they lose the fun things for their misdeeds just like adults in the real world do.

Joyce agreed with Austen regarding the RC classroom management strategies, her comments reflected her agreement:

RC has changed the way I deal with behavior. It gives me fewer options when dealing with poor behavior and involves a lot of monitoring for what should be a simple process.

In contrast some teachers found that RC has improved their classroom management skills by offering a solid foundation on which to build a classroom community. Oates, a

thirty-year teacher commented on her experience with the Responsive Classroom Model.

RC has reinforced my belief that true learning is self-motivated and many times self-guided. We as teachers may only be touching the surface on any given subject and a truly interested (shall we say motivated) student will take that little piece of information and take it places we may never have imagined.

Another teacher, Carlin went on to give an example of how RC has improved her teaching.

I am better able to maintain my focus on teaching when students know what is expected and are able to correct it themselves, whether that would be taking a break or an apology of action.

Other teachers use a combination of RC methods and extrinsic motivation to manage the classroom. Examples of this are seen in the following comments.

-I fill a jar with beans as they do well and also follow RC.

-I reward and use positive reinforcement

-No recess if your name is on the board and that can happen for a variety of reasons. It can be earned off when the behavior ends or they improve.

-We talk about community, responsibility, and model community in morning meeting.

-There are student-generated guidelines and consequences as well as modeling appropriate behavior to see positive outcomes from appropriate behavior.

-RC, the class is driven by using CARES and following class rules. By this point in the year I just have to say 'self-control' and a student is able to identify in

what way he is not controlling himself and fix the matter. If not, I go through the process of break/buddy room, etc.

-I use positive reinforcement such as small rewards like stickers. I also play lots of educational games.

From the surveys alone it appears that while we have all worked in the same place for at least this year, and the majority of respondents had at least some RC training, all of our methods were different. It appeared as if many respondents were using methods that had been tried and proven to work in their classroom as opposed to the school wide model of RC that was expected. Examples of this include playing educational games, rewarding for good behavior and punishing for bad behavior. The use of RC as an intrinsic motivator was more easily assessed during the observation period.

Data from Observations

Throughout the observations the theme of discipline as a motivator was seen in various classes. There were three distinct discipline theories that the teachers subscribed to. Ms. Bl, Ms. Y, and Ms. G are teachers that do not have students in common nor are they on a team together in any capacity. However all three have a classroom management style that I will categorize as authoritarian. For the purpose of this study a authoritarian style of teaching will be defined as a classroom in which there are numerous behavioral regulations which are seen as punitive and restrictive where students have neither a say in their management, nor are they seen to need explanations.

During my observation of Ms. Bl I witnessed multiple scenes in which a student was not being immediately compliant and the whole class got yelled at.

Student 1: Why do we have to do this?

Ms. Bl: This is the lesson. Why are you here? To learn of course.

Student 2: Ms. Bl, why are you yelling at us?

Ms. Bl: This is not yelling, this is my normal tone of voice.

The above interaction is an example of how students are motivated to behave in an authoritarian classroom. The teacher yelled, but did not consider herself to be yelling. Her actions were punitive to the entire class, not just the misbehaving students. At the end of this altercation all of the students were made to stand in front of their desks for the remainder of the class in silence. While this is not a logical consequence it however was effective for this teacher. It was evident that Ms. Bl felt her methods were effective and in compliance with RC as she had the students read through the class rules in unison with her and then said, “See, these are the rules, we all agreed to follow them.” The students looked at each other in what is my estimation confusion, as I too was confused by the link between the class rules and standing in silence behind a desk. This teacher believed she was in RC compliance simply because she had the students read the rules. There was no connection between what she did and what was the actual tenet of RC.

Both Ms. Y and Ms. G were observed during a variety of times and also used an authoritarian management style. Students were assigned seats and had to stay in them for the duration of the class unless the teacher explicitly told them to do something else. Each student had a set of worksheets or bookwork to complete and when they were complete they were to read silently. Both teachers sat at their desks on the computer during this time. When a student was disruptive the teacher would point to the ‘take a

break' chair or have an EA take them to the buddy room. Students were not working briskly but would, in three cases, do one problem, stare at the clock, doodle, stare at the clock, and then do another problem. When an extreme behavior issue cropped up or a student was openly defiant the teacher would start yelling at the whole class. This type of motivation seemed to gain the deviating student more attention and the rest of the class negative attention that they did not earn. Students were not allowed to problem solve as a group from my observation, they were simply the receivers of the teachers punishment.

On the opposite side of the spectrum there was Mr. B, Ms. Pi, and Ms. R. These teachers were permissive and indulgent, which will be defined for the purpose of this study as a lack of involvement where the environment is non-punitive, there are few demands on the students but they are actively supported in their efforts to seek their own ends using reasonable means. Mr. B and Ms. Pi are upper grade teachers who utilized the classroom community to control behavior. An example of this type of management style was a small group exercise in which students were given a list of tasks to complete. The students had to create their own puzzle using the words they had been learning in class either individually or in groups of three. Ms. Pi did not give any additional instructions but did answer questions if kids came to her. There were six groups and two students who chose to work independently. The groups closest to me spent forty-five minutes arguing about the name of the puzzle and did not complete the assignment and did not face any punitive action. One other group acted out a sword fight for about twenty minutes before the teacher asked, "shouldn't you be working?" In this vein the entire class period was run and students were basically practicing self-

motivation. The teacher did not interfere in any group project nor did she conference with any of the students who did not directly come to her. It appeared that the students were used to this kind of teaching style and had found their own niches. Students could and did choose to work with people that met their own motivational level. The teacher was more of an advisor than a manager and would use teacher language to reflect this.

“I don’t know Ben, what do you think the puzzle should look like? What is the main purpose of this assignment and how can you best decide on how to make it work for you?”

“There is no right or wrong answer here, just do your best and try to meet all the criteria that you set forth in the beginning. You know the expectations and the rest is up to you.”

“Will sword fighting help you reach your goal? If so find a way to incorporate it into your puzzle and make the project represent you.”

The teacher language used in these three interactions I witnessed appeared to leave the students confused and not sure what to do, in fact the three boys kept sword fighting until one of the other kids told them to “knock it off and get to work, or do you want to fail and be here forever?” It appeared that students were more responsible for their learning than the teacher and in turn that made some students take more of an interest and some students slack off.

The classroom management portion of these classes differed greatly from the first group of authoritarian teachers. Here students were asked to make decisions about their learning with little input from the teacher and were expected to behave simply because that was a classroom expectation. On the other hand there was a lack of

consequence besides not getting the same learning experience as the rest of the students. The teacher language in these classrooms did not push a student one way or the other, meaning it did not seem to motivate or punish but simply bring out questions for the students to answer themselves.

The third group of teachers displayed an authoritative classroom management style that for the purpose of this study will be defined as having behavioral principles, high expectations of appropriate behavior, and clear statements about why certain behaviors are acceptable and others not while maintaining caring student-teacher relationships. This group is made up of two teachers, Ms. P and Mr. O, both middle grades teachers with less than three years teaching at the RC school and at least five years teaching in other schools. The moment I walked in the classrooms of these two teachers I was welcomed by the teacher and the students and then both teachers told the students that, “Ms. Dana is here to watch us work as a community and we can’t talk to her at all, pretend that she isn’t even here.” Then the teacher asked if they had any questions and spent five to ten minutes talking about why I was there and this set the tone for my observations in both the Mr. O and Ms. P class.

There were many examples of teacher language used to enhance the classroom community in both of these classes. Below are some examples of what each teacher said that seemed to motivate the students to control themselves in the classroom.

-We are all citizens of this classroom, what are some ways that we can make each other feel welcome and show that everyone’s opinion matters?

-Right now I need for all of you to show me that you are ready to learn. What does it look like, sound like, and feel like when we are ready to learn?

-There are no bad kids but there are bad choices, please remember to make good choices today, and always remember that I care about all of you a lot.

-I am going to tell you what I see and then I want you to think about it for one minute and then tell me how you can fix your body so that you are ready to be apart of our community.

It appeared that the students and teachers were working together within a set of class rules that everyone liked and agreed on. The atmosphere was positive with student work hanging all over the place, the teacher constantly walking around and a mix of group work, individual work, and teacher-led activities. Teachers were using the RC model but it was not the school model, it was a model that their classes had formed to make it work for them. There was a mix of extrinsic motivation such as earning a popcorn party for five days of excellent behavior, and intrinsic behavior such as raising your hand to answer a question because that is the expectation.

As a teacher and researcher I define the classroom community as a place where students and teachers work together to manage behavior and expectations. From my observations and surveys I have seen that some teachers use discipline as a motivator while others shun it completely in an effort to foster creativity and problem solving. Classroom management is handled in three distinct ways as seen in the above data, with some teachers acting as authoritarians, some as permissive/indulgent, and some as authoritative.

Student Teacher Relationships

One of the strongest themes to emerge during the course of my observations was the relationship that each teacher had with their students on an individual and class

basis. All of the observations I conducted demonstrated that there were different relationships among the teachers and students and it seemed to directly affect how much motivation a student needed and what kind of motivation they were utilizing in their learning environment.

Communication Style. Students and teachers had differing relationships from grade to grade but the relationships seemed deeper and based more on communication, as the students got successively older. Being able to communicate openly is helped along by the classroom community and that differs from classroom to classroom. Teachers encouraged open communication by the use of effective teacher language.

Mr. O, a middle grades teacher, teaches his class science, language arts, math, and social studies on a daily basis. Mr. O used the following teacher language during my observations.

- You and I can talk in five minutes when I am done with directing the rest of the class. Go find a seat by my desk and I will be there in a little while so we can talk.
- Your idea is well thought out and well developed. I think that you are really on the way to getting your project completed and now I want you to think about what we can do to make you more sure about your work.
- There are two ways we can handle this, you can apologize to the class and then go back to your seat or we can find a way that you can fix what you did so that everything goes back to the way it was.

Mr. O was not the only teacher that used teacher language to improve student teacher communication and relationships. Ms. P also used language conducive to open communication that also made students think about their learning.

-I know that you are done with all of your work but some of your friends aren't. What are some ways we can extend this project so that you can learn more about it and create a learning opportunity.

The above statement not only helps open up communication but also motivates students to look within themselves in order to decide what should come next in their learning.

Many other teachers echoed Ms. P's statements. It appears that teachers use specific language from RC that helps induce intrinsic motivation in students.

Positive vs. Negative Motivation. By observing the happenings of the classroom after teachers talk to individual or groups of students I found some interesting communication patterns.

~Every time a student had a personal interaction with a teacher that ended positively the student would go back to their seat and work without talking for at least five minutes.

~Students who conferenced with a teacher during class were more likely to raise their hands to answer questions during a whole group.

~Teachers who used positive teacher language to get students to think were more sought after for opinions on works in progress than teachers who only used punitive communication.

The number of incidents in which students and teachers interacted without punishment being given determined positive student/teacher relationships within this

study. Each class was observed for three one hour periods where I tallied the number of times the teacher communicated individually or with groups of students and they went back to working afterward. This was my working definition of positive communication that led to intrinsic motivation. Negative motivation was defined by the number of times a teacher yelled at or spoke to a student and the student went back to their seat and sulked or did not work without an additional conference with the teacher.

# Incidents	Ms. R	Ms. G	Ms. Pi	Mr. O	Ms. P	Ms. Bl	Ms. Y	Mr. B
Positive	42	38	41	82	79	14	34	47
Negative	27	25	31	7	12	38	22	30

Not surprisingly the number of negative motivators were higher when the number of positive motivators was low. I found that the nature of the student/teacher relationship was directly related to the classroom management style of the teacher. Students that had positive interactions with their teachers were more likely to keep working and asking questions that resulted in more positive interactions. While some of this data is related to the relative age of the students and their temperament the data also includes teachers who have been at the RC school for many years and may have relationships with students that span many years.

Teacher Expectations for Academic Success. Another aspect of the student teacher relationship, as RC affects it, is the level of academic success that teachers assume students are capable of versus their actual performance. While this aspect was not readily observable it was a question asked in the survey. Teachers rated how confident they thought their students were in core subject areas and then rated their actual

competency in the same subjects. They were also asked to explain any discrepancies.

The below table shows that many teachers rate their students as having confidence and actual ability that are equal to or higher than their perceived competence. Most teachers rated their students as somewhat confident in most areas with the bolded areas holding the highest number of responses.

1. Please rate how confident you think your students feel about the below subjects.						
		Not Confident		Somewhat Confident		Very Confident
	Language Arts (reading)	0.0% (0)	23.1% (3)	53.8% (7)	15.4% (2)	7.7% (1)
	Math	0.0% (0)	38.5% (5)	38.5% (5)	23.1% (3)	0.0% (0)
	Science	0.0% (0)	46.2% (6)	38.5% (5)	15.4% (2)	0.0% (0)
	Social Studies	0.0% (0)	38.5% (5)	46.2% (6)	15.4% (2)	0.0% (0)

In the table below the confidence of the students is juxtaposed to the actual competence that teachers feel the students have.

2. What is the actual ability level of your students in the below subject areas?						
		Not Able		Somewhat Able		Very Able
	Language Arts (reading)	7.7% (1)	38.5% (5)	46.2% (6)	0.0% (0)	7.7% (1)
	Math	8.3% (1)	33.3% (4)	33.3% (4)	25.0% (3)	0.0% (0)
	Science	8.3% (1)	25.0% (3)	50.0% (6)	16.7% (2)	0.0% (0)
	Social Studies	8.3% (1)	25.0% (3)	58.3% (7)	8.3% (1)	0.0% (0)

It is important that students feel confident in themselves in order to do well in school. By looking at how their teachers rate their confidence versus actual performance I can deduce that while some students perceive themselves as more able than they are, per teacher perception, the teachers also see positive attributes in their students- basically they believe in them. Teacher explanations of their ratings produced many different answers.

-We tell them they are doing a good job even when they aren't so they feel confident in their abilities and in turn learn to internalize that and motivate themselves to do better and better.

-Students who are confident in themselves put more effort into work and want to do better for me because they want to please me. This makes their effort increase and in general their competence goes up.

-My students want to make me proud and want to do well. Sometimes they are more competent than they think they are and that is a result of not having enough support either from the teacher or home.

-I think that my students can gauge pretty well how competent they are and how confident they feel so my estimations are that they are more on target being somewhat confident and somewhat competent in most areas.

Teachers who have good relationships with students are more open and caring.

It seems that students are more apt to put forth an effort in classes where they feel a connection to the teacher. This is probably due to the fact that students want to do well for the teacher and do not want their feelings to be hurt; or it may be due to the fact that students can communicate difficulties and hopes and dreams if they have a good relationship with the teacher.

Academic Choice in the Learning Environment

All of the teachers observed and surveyed are required to use Academic Choice in their classrooms. As previously mentioned in the participants' section some of the teachers have never been formally trained to use RC. Using academic choice to increase

intrinsic motivation was seen in many ways during the observation cycle. Teachers are observed quarterly and required to turn in lesson plans that demonstrate academic choice throughout the year. This became a key theme in my study based on the great disparity I was witnessing throughout the observations. Evidence of the use of academic choice occurred and can be seen in these comments.

-Okay, now that we all know about triangles we are going to break into groups and do different activities with triangles. There are four stations and each person will rotate through and do each activity.

-Let's all sit on the rug and look at the chart. We have five tables and each student can choose where they want to go today. We will do this everyday and every student will go through each station on a different day.

-We are looking at business proposals today. You may decide how you are going to present your business proposal as long as you follow the rubric and remember to have each area covered.

Considering that each teacher is required to use Academic Choice in their curriculum I was surprised to only find four examples of this sort of choice within the twenty-four hours I observed different classes. Within the surveys teachers were asked 'how is academic choice used in your classroom?' The participant statements show the range of definitions the teachers have for Academic Choice. Some teachers use reading choice as A.C.

-Students are at times allowed to choose their own reading material and free write as opposed to everyone writing on the same subject.

-I have used it for reading. I make different centers/activities that they are allowed to pick from. When this is done I have an adult at each group to help them.

-They are allowed, sometimes, to choose their books.

Other teachers use A.C. as a reward or an option on how to present or use materials.

-The students need to learn state standards but they choose how they present information and how they learn it.

-I use academic choice as a reward.

-It is usually the materials they use, that's the "choice".

-Independent reading, research topics, literature response options, etc.

-My students always get the option of presenting their abilities in anyway that they can.

While, other teachers utilize Academic Choice as a part of the curriculum using it for certain projects and subjects.

-Usually the students have a certain assignment, task, or section that is required.

It is then followed by a choice of various things they can do that relates to the overall assignment or theme. For example they may all have to do a required report on an animal, but they get to choose the animal and how they want to present it. It could be a costume, poster, or speech. Also they have a required spelling packet, but when that is complete they have the choice of working on their words in various ways, using a white board, rainbow tracing, or word finds.

-With spelling and sight words, students have the option of writing the words on white boards, building them with magnetic letters or jumping out the words on an ABC mat.

-I use academic choice on projects. Students may choose how they wish to express their knowledge after they have learned a particular skill. For example students who have just learned the inverted style of reporting can then choose to write a news story with it, make a flow chart, do a presentation, or come up with a creative project as long as I approve it.

The variety of academic choice and the level of the work chosen for it seem to go hand in hand. In the surveys teachers not only commented on how they use academic choice, but during the observations very few examples of Academic Choice were seen.

Opinions about academic choice tended to vary. Some of the teachers stated that they use it for a lot of things while others noted that they use it sparingly or for specific subject like choosing a reading book when the assigned work is completed. Mr. B demonstrates Academic Choice, during a class observation where students were working in small groups to complete posters.

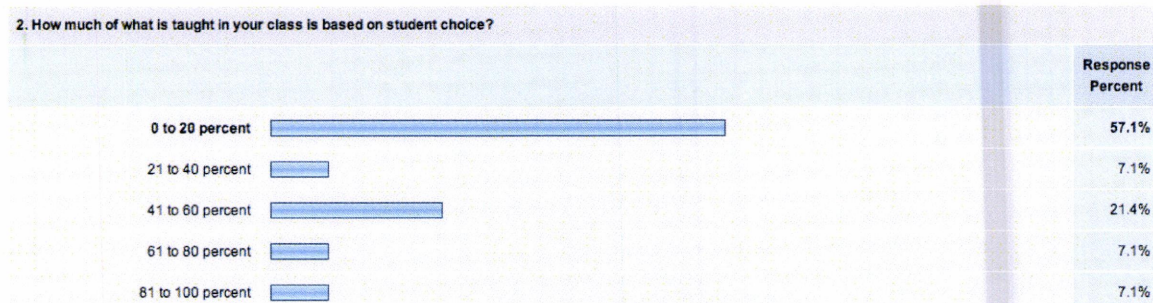
I want you to be motivated to come up with your own ideas for this poster project. I am telling you that it has to have a title, body, pictures, and two additional elements. What those elements turn out to be are up to you. What do you want to get out of this project, how is it going to help you? Look at the board and pick a topic and then get started. You can use your books, the Internet, or notes. Your choices are limitless; this all depends on what you want to get out of it.

Mr. B used academic choice to increase intrinsic motivation with using an RC standard. Students are able to use their prior knowledge but also decide on how to best incorporate what they feel is important into the project. This was not the norm while I was observing however. I found many teachers would assign work and students would all complete the same worksheet or bookwork without variation. When they completed work they were able to read a book of their choice. This however is not the basis of Academic Choice according to RC, but simply silent reading to fill time while the rest of the class completes the assignment.

The success of RC in using intrinsic motivation depends a lot on the individual teacher. Requiring teachers to use academic choice does not require them to use it in a specific way. The surveys showed that over half the teachers consider reading independently a form of academic choice. Observations detailed that teachers are using direct instruction and small groups to complete curriculum. There is very little in the way of using academic choice to increase intrinsic motivation. This is in part, due to the fact that the school is in its third consecutive year of not meeting academic performance standards and must have every minute accounted for and filled with the appointed curriculum. Joyce stated that, "This year I don't have as much student choice as I would like. Because of our schedule they don't have as much choice as I have given students in the past. Usually I give center time and many different options they can do. The rest of our day usually depends on the schedule the school has given me."

The degree by which teachers used Academic Choice successfully depended on their students, subject area, and desire to include it in the daily curriculum. Below is a

table that shows teacher estimate of how much of what is taught is based on student choice.



Considering that Academic Choice is all about the “how” of teaching rather than the “what” there are many teachers that feel the students do not have a choice in either what or how they are learning. In order to increase intrinsic motivation students need choices and options for their learning. The observations showed that there were few academic choice opportunities and the surveys coincide with that information.

Success in the RC school is defined by how well teachers integrate motivators into learning opportunities. In order to do well and increase intrinsic motivation it appeared that teachers and students needed to have a positive relationship. From the observations it appears if students feel they have a positive connection with the teacher they are more apt to perform learning activities on their own and try new things. Connected to the increase in intrinsic motivation is the level of academic choice in the learning environment. Teachers clearly show that their choices in how to include academic choice are limited by the school but when they do use it the results are more creative and well thought out. Classroom management is also linked to the level of intrinsic motivation found in a class. Teachers can affect the intrinsic motivation of their students by their classroom management styles, be they authoritarian, authoritative, or permissive/indulgent manner. Authoritarian management styles observed at this school

tended to have their students choose their own reading materials when they were done with the assigned work. Permissive/indulgent teachers allowed their students to choose their own materials all the time or how to present any subject matter in their own way without many limitations. Authoritative teachers used academic choice in select subject areas and were usually connected to individual projects the students were working on.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND APPLICATIONS

Overview

Throughout my review of the teacher surveys and my observations it became clear that there were two very different stories that were being told. The first story was the story of the surveys where teachers were for the most part extremely positive about the RC system and its benefits on intrinsic motivation. The second story however showed many classrooms where there was little evidence of intrinsic motivation strategies and the difficulty of using the RC system on a daily basis. By conducting both surveys and observations I was able to obtain a good cross-section of information that led me to reconsider how our school implements RC in respect to the three key themes: classroom management, student teacher relationships, and academic choice in the learning environment. The following are the conclusions drawn and recommendations being made regarding each of the three themes. Also found are my reflections on each conclusion and how I applied them in my classroom.

Classroom Management

Overview

Students and teachers need to feel secure in order to learn, complete work and form working relationships. In turn, this allows the classroom community to be effective and teachers to help create academic risk takers. As a school we must create an environment where students and teachers feel that they are secure. This is where our classroom management practices come under an intense examination. Some of the teachers in our school strive to provide students with clear expectations and consistent

enforcement in an authoritative teacher role. This allows everyone to feel secure and learn in the classroom. It was surprising to see that the teachers who filled out the survey had some valid concerns about how to implement RC practices where they conflicted with their own educational experiences.

Conclusions

While some of the teacher participants indicated in their surveys that they think RC is a good system in theory the observations revealed that they tended not to employ RC strategies consistently. They would use some of the strategies and not others from the program. For example, the strategy borrowed frequently was the ‘Take A Break’ or the discipline piece. At the time of the observations teachers had been implementing an RC classroom for over six months. ‘Take A Break’ was being utilized by the varying grade levels in the same way- to punish students who were not complying with teacher expectations after a verbal warning. Teachers, myself included, did not use the ‘Take A Break’ method as it was intended – as “a thinking time for the student to realize what they needed to do in order to participate fully in class”(Responsive Classroom 1, 2002). As a school community we were modeling the ‘Take A Break’ as a place to think but in reality were sending non-compliant students there multiple times. The lack of follow through with non-compliant students was not teaching them to internalize positive behavior, rather it was teaching them that if they wanted to get attention they should act up. After spending some time monitoring my fellow teachers on observations, a pattern became very obvious. Students would speak out, a teacher would tell them to be quiet, they would then proceed to be quiet for a short period, then the student would get caught again, and finally, the teacher would tell them to ‘Take A Break’. The student

then goes to the designated chair and is supposed to sit quietly while they still listen to the lesson. However the student usually would start to do something else like play with their hands or stare at the wall therein missing more of the lesson. He or she would not get the chance to internalize the positive behavior, because of not being allowed to experience it. In the younger grades telling a student to ‘take a break’ also resulted in a small tussle for supremacy between the student and teacher. This was difficult for me to realize as I pride myself on being a communicative teacher in all situations. However, what I saw and realized about my own classroom management was that I had bought into a system that had kids sit in a chair with no end time. I put them in front of the class to be basically stared at by the rest of the class--not as bad as the dunce cap, but still punitive. These examples were in stark contrast to the intents and purposes of the RC system: to promote the group dynamic and the idea that the group can influence the individual by behavior alone.

Self-Reflection

I can imagine many scenarios where teachers who do use the RC system promote intrinsic group motivation but get stuck in the rut of giving students breaks again and again without seeing an improvement on the behavior itself. It is not my intention or that of my fellow teachers to keep pushing a system that does not work or will hurt students. In direct opposition however I do see that I am only using RC, as it is the school policy and do not have any other ways to effectively deal with student behavior if they don’t “get it” and start intrinsically motivating themselves to behave according to class rules.

For the month of March I set out with the intention to give more behavior cues to students demonstrating disruptive behavior and positive reinforcement to students demonstrating on-task behaviors after the observations. In terms of disruptive behavior I still use the 'take a break' but I also conference with those students after they get back from the break. I have moved the 'break' chairs to the back of the room so that they face to the front of the room and no one is sticking out by sitting up front. It has not been an easy process to break my years of training and find the time to conference with each student. I have had to take time out of class instruction to speak to the students who are in a 'break' and it seems as if they are getting even more attention for misbehaving than the students who are on-task. This has not been an easy or seamless process for the students or me. In terms of providing positive reinforcement when students are praised for following directions and being on-task I have noticed that they are more willing to go above and beyond in their work, essentially teaching themselves intrinsic motivation through a praise system. To foster this, I have found that mix of extrinsic and intrinsic motivators worked best for my students.

It is important to note at this point that the amount of praise given or conferences given to students vary with the age, class, and student receptivity to the change. Giving more conferences to some students may actually promote the bad behavior and teach them that if they act out they will get my attention making this an extrinsic motivator. Praising students who are on-task has increased academic success for my students who are not naturally willing to speak up in class. In addition to experiencing academic success the students and I also increase our student-teacher relationship. By fostering a positive relationship I have found that it enhances the

classroom community in many ways such as an observable increase in student participation and more willingness to get back to work after taking a break.

Student/Teacher Relationships

Overview

The relationship between the students and teacher are an essential part of the classroom experience. These relationships can increase or detract from the educational experience. Students must feel supported and cared for by the teacher in order to increase their own intrinsic motivation or their confidence may wane. How teachers develop student relationships depends on how they relate to their students in day-to-day communications. These communications include classroom instruction, conferencing, and everything in-between. Teachers see students around the school, shopping at the grocery store, and out on the playground. All of these communications build upon each other to create a relationship that the student relies upon to motivate them to do better and make the teacher proud.

Conclusions

The observations conducted for this study show that there are strong and weak student teacher relationships in every class. There may have been bias in this part of the study as the teachers that volunteered to be observed all knew that I was there to observe their relationships with the students in the context of increasing intrinsic motivation. On the other hand the fact that the teachers were willing to let me observe them demonstrates that they think they have positive relationships with their students. Students do well for teachers that they like and want to work with. My study was limited to observations of student teacher relationships throughout the RC school and

because of this I was limited in exploring student teacher relationships in the broader context of RC settings.

The teachers who volunteered to participate in the observations were teachers who were secure in their jobs and not afraid to have me in their rooms as an observer. This is a practice that all teachers at the RC school are familiar with and welcome as we conduct peer reviews of lessons every month. The teachers looked at this as an opportunity to demonstrate their skills. One teacher commented, “Dana, I’m glad you are doing this, it will show people what its really like to work with this many kids and make them all feel like they are the most important student you have.” This also indicates that teachers enjoy sharing their experiences and felt empowered that they would be able to talk and it would be considered anonymous in this paper. Another teacher commented, “You know I love these kids, but its really annoying that we are being asked to do so much all the time and I feel like we just don’t have the time to really get to know the kids like we should.”

Student/teacher relationships are affected by classroom management styles as well. Students were more willing to perform for someone they liked who would praise them at the end of the work. Teachers who had more negative interactions than positive interactions with students were less likely to get students wanting to come and talk to them. Observations indicated that teachers who were more positive had a better relationship with the class as a whole and had more kids that were willing to work above and beyond the assignment and increase their own intrinsic motivation. My recommendation is to follow the RC model in this aspect and really spend time on building a positive classroom community where the students are not afraid to take

academic risks. Some of the best student teacher relationships that I witnessed were when students were talking about things not related to academics. Teachers who were willing to listen to students talk about pets, stuff that happened at home, and future plans were more popular talking companions than those that did not want to interact with their students on a personal level.

Teachers indicated through the surveys and observations that communication, respect, and openness were the major factors that affect student/teacher relationships. In turn this leads to an increase in intrinsic motivation among students, as they want to do well for a teacher they like.

Self-Reflection

I am glad that I was able to see how the student/teacher dynamic worked in multiple classrooms across the grade levels. While this is a practice that I cannot hope to keep up as I teach my own classes I would like to institute one day a week where we just talk as a group about how our kids are doing and what some things are that are working and not working in relation to the student teacher relationship. As a result of this study I decided to talk to my own students and ask them what they liked about my class and what they thought could use work. A general consensus was that students liked that I cared so much about them and that my use of the phrase “home skillet” was hilarious and a real tension breaker. From my observations of other classes I have an appreciation for forming lasting relationships. The teachers who participated in the observations and I have formed stronger bonds now over the fact that we are concerned about how the students relate to adults and want them to build positive relationships with us.

Additionally the observations helped show that the relationships I have with students might be individualized but they are all valuable and will benefit the rest of my students in other classes. The benefit that will ensue is in the form of teachers who are cognizant of the role they play in building a strong student teacher relationship as well as increasing student motivation. It is through the observations that I was able to learn the importance of positive communication with students and the affect it has on their motivation in a particular class. This helps me personally as since the observations I have begun to employ a mini-class meeting time where we all get together and share what is going on in our lives. I call it high-low and each student shares one high point and one low point of their day and then we go on with the class. This builds student relationships and also lets the kids see that I have problems too- it builds a stronger relationship when the teacher self-discloses.

From this I have taken a more open stance when it comes to my teaching. I am now more willing to talk about stuff that falls outside of school as long as it is not interfering with my teaching or the other student's learning time. This opens the door for students to ask questions and really form lasting relationships with me as a person and not just their teacher. Greeting my students at the door daily and asking about their home life or what they are going to do this weekend achieves this openness. All of my classes have about twenty-three students in them and it is easy to interact with my students on a personal level. Since students are more apt to learn from a person that they relate to I try to make myself available for students before and after class if they want to talk. Sometimes I attend their basketball games, eat lunch with them, or learn a new dance with them in order to spend time getting to know the kids. At the end of each

class I tell them all, “Remember that I care about each and every one of you, please make good choices today”.

I have taken the information that I have gathered and am implementing more strategies in order to enhance the relationships I have with students. I hope to share these strategies with my fellow teachers during teacher training this summer.

Academic Choice in the Learning Environment

Overview

As previously mentioned, teachers are required to use Academic Choice in their classrooms in order to enhance learning opportunities. The successful use of this strategy can lead to an increase in the intrinsic motivation of students and their overall competence in a subject area. Teachers who use academic choice effectively were observed to have students that were more willing to go out on an academic limb and try more and more things that related to the subject. However, the use of academic choice is a double-edged sword. While, if use properly, it can enhance lessons, it can also be a detriment when teachers are forced to use it.

Conclusions

According to teacher surveys the use of academic choice was not in the difficulty of implementing it but in the lack of time and number of times they had to use it in a given subject area. Overwhelmingly, teachers used the same academic choice model again and again- free reading time at the end of an assignment. One teacher commented, “Dana, there is no way that I can provide an academic choice in every subject area every week because there is simply no time and the curriculum is frankly not set up for it, we are drill and fill here.” I believe that teachers want to increase their

student's intrinsic motivation and want them to succeed in school. However, students, teachers, parents, and the state directly link success with grades and the use of academic choice through the RC cannot be shown as a foolproof method for increasing test scores. It is possible that teachers may have the best of intentions but when there are standards to meet they have to pick and choose activities that they feel will benefit the most students in the most clear and concise way. Teachers need to push their students to think and make mistakes and then learn from those mistakes. By teaching them that there is no wrong answer and all you have to do is try they are not following school guidelines. There is a delicate balance that teachers must walk between getting students to understand their potential and meeting the state standards.

Self-Reflection

After I finished my observations I decided to try something new. I am experimenting with one of my classes regarding the workload and their intrinsic motivation to get their work in and done with care. There is only one project that students are required to do. If they complete it they will gain a 'P/M', which means that they are progressing towards the standards/meeting the standards. There will also be three other projects that students can choose to do in order to increase their grade to a 'M' where they would be at level or an 'E' which means exceeds standards. So far I have received the completed project from over half of the class and most of them have started on additional projects. The interesting thing is that when I asked them why they wanted to do the additional project the answer was, 'because it looks interesting' or 'I like your class and I want to do the work.' This so far has been working very well for the students and me. The students who are more intrinsically motivated to do other

work will and those that aren't come and talk to me about what else they should do in the class.

Questions for Further Research

I know that I have only begun to delve into what could be learned regarding intrinsic motivation in the RC. There are huge numbers of RC schools in the state of Minnesota and across the United States with more being added yearly. Many studies have been done which explain what in a RC can affect student learning but not much has been done about how the RC promotes intrinsic motivation.

This study focused solely on my RC school and classroom practices regarding intrinsic motivation. The study could be broadened to explore how or why RC as a model helps students increase their intrinsic motivation. It would have been interesting to survey the entire student population at my school to gather more information about how the students feel regarding student teacher relationships, classroom management, and academic choice. My teacher participants represent teachers who volunteered to be apart of the study and this may have affected my results of my observations. I did not speak to teachers who did not volunteer.

There are RC schools in the state of Minnesota that have different rules and regulations regarding motivation. It would be interesting to compare the teacher perspective on student competence and confidence to RC schools that are supposed to use solely intrinsic motivation like ours. It would be interesting to survey teachers at an RC school and teachers at a regular public school in reference to their respective experiences at their schools. Which group would feel that their students are more

intrinsically motivated? How did that group achieve a higher degree of intrinsic motivation among their students?

As stated earlier, I feel that there is much more to look at in the realm of RC and intrinsic motivation. My study was focused on teacher perceptions of motivation in our school alone. The perceptions of intrinsic motivation and the RC could be expanded in a multitude of ways and could be looked at through a variety of distinctive lenses.

CHAPTER 6

SELF REFLECTION

I have learned many things about my school and myself by conducting this study. It has been an eye-opening experience to view the teaching practices of my colleagues as well as myself and really question the methods we use on a daily basis. I feel that the information I gathered and presented in this study will shape my teaching for many years to come. Also, I have learned many things about myself as a learner by completing this research project.

The teacher participants were open with me regarding their teaching practices and welcoming when I was in their classroom. I knew that our practices as an RC school could affect the student's intrinsic motivation but I had never seen it in action before. The three key themes that developed from the surveys and observations (classroom management, student teacher relationships, and academic choice in the learning environment) showed exactly how teacher perceptions of teaching in a RC school affects the way students and teachers use intrinsic motivation.

The area of classroom management was my biggest surprise. I went into the observations assuming that everyone taught the way I did. I was not aware of the dizzying array of teaching styles that our school housed. It was clear from the observations that the students responded differently to teachers based on their classroom management skills. Students were more open and willing to take their learning to the next level when the teacher had set expectations and communicated those clearly to all of the students.

The relationship between the student and teacher is integral for student's to feel as if they are apart of a community in the classroom. Students need to feel that connection to the teacher and the teacher needs to be aware that students are looking for a way to connect to them on a personal level. The key to building these relationships was openness on the part of the teacher and an ability to talk to the students about everyday things outside of school. The teachers that greeted students at the door and talked to them about their plans for the weekend were most successful in bringing out academic risk taking in their students. Teachers can increase intrinsic motivation by connecting with students on an individual level. By connecting with the students teachers are showing them that they care about what they do and this makes the students want to work harder for them to make them proud.

I was surprised by my findings on academic choice in the learning environment. While many classes had open learning environments there was very little going on that had to do with academic choice. The academic choice that was occurring was based around students choosing their own books for silent reading time. I struggle with what to do in this situation because many teachers are busy and trying to incorporate as much learning as possible into the day. However my research made it clear that students who feel as if they have choices in the way they learn will be more motivated to carry their learning farther and deeper then before.

I did not choose teaching so much that I fell into it after college. Since then teaching has become a passion for me. I am always looking for different ways to present material and things that will catch the interest of the students. Undertaking this research and learning how to conduct an action research project is a skill that I will carry with me

throughout my educational career. I can affect change in my life and being a more positive communicator can make that happen so that my students can benefit from this research.

CHAPTER 7

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CHAPTER 8

APPENDIX

Intrinsic Motivation through the Responsive Classroom Model

1.

* 1. How many years have you been teaching?

* 2. How many years have you worked at your current school?

* 3. What were the approximate dates you attended RC 1 and 2?

4. What does the phrase 'intrinsic motivation' mean to you?

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Intrinsic Motivation through the Responsive Classroom Model

[Exit this survey >>](#)

2.

1. Please rate how confident you think your students feel about the below subjects.

	Not Confident		Somewhat Confident		Very Confident
Language Arts (reading)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Math	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. What is the actual ability level of your students in the below subject areas?

	Not Able		Somewhat Able		Very Able
Language Arts (reading)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Math	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 3. Do your ratings of the student's perceived ability versus their actual ability differ? If so, why?

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Intrinsic Motivation through the Responsive Classroom Model

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3.

* 1. How is Academic Choice used in your classroom?

2. How much of what is taught in your class is based on student choice?

- ☐ 0 to 20 percent
- ☐ 21 to 40 percent
- ☐ 41 to 60 percent
- ☐ 61 to 80 percent
- ☐ 81 to 100 percent

3. Please list some examples or strategies that you use to add to student's perceived sense of control over their learning.

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Intrinsic Motivation through the Responsive Classroom Model

[Exit this survey >>](#)

4.

* 1. In your opinion what are your students main goals (school, friends, TV, etc.) right now?

* 2. How often do their individual goals coincide with class goals?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Half the time
- ☐ Most of the time
- ☐ All of the time

3. Check the type of goal structure that best describes your classroom environment.

- ☐ Individualistic
- ☐ Competitive
- ☐ Cooperative

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Intrinsic Motivation through the Responsive Classroom Model**5. What are some ways you motivate students in the following areas?****1. Behavior****2. Completion of work****3. Doing their best on their work****4. Please list any examples of how you use intrinsic motivation in your classroom.****5. Please list any examples of how you use extrinsic motivation in your classroom.**

Intrinsic Motivation through the Responsive Classroom Model

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6.

1. How often do you rely on intrinsic motivators to maintain your classroom expectations?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Once a Month
- ☐ Once a Week
- ☐ Once a Day
- ☐ More then Once a Day

Other (please specify)

2. How often do you use extrinsic motivation in your classroom?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Once a Month
- ☐ Once a Week
- ☐ Once a Day
- ☐ More then Once a Day

Other (please specify)

3. How has working in a Responsive Classroom school changed or focused your teaching in terms of intrinsic motivation?

Intrinsic Motivation through the Responsive Classroom Model

7.

1. Comments?

2. Questions?

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